

## Hebrews 5:4-8

“Christ, A Qualified High Priest”

The sympathy and the sufficiency of Christ, our compassionate High Priest has been the subject at hand as we've made the segue out of Ch 4 and into Ch 5. The fact that He's our great High Priest who has passed through the heavens is developed and discussed there in the latter portion of Ch 4. and If you remember right we mentioned to you last time that the author then seeks to both compare and contrast the High Priesthood of Christ, with the High Priesthood of Aaron here in Ch 5.

Though I had to sorta point that out to you last time because we didn't get too far into the text, today as we continue to forge through Ch 5 it becomes very apparent. and Though here in the 1<sup>st</sup> portion of Ch 5 the emphasis seems to lie mostly on the comparisons (taken from *among* men, appointed *for* men, both representing man, both compassionate *toward* man, both offering gifts and sacrifice on behalf of man) the portion that we're dealing with today deals primarily with the contrasts. In that the author demonstrates decisively the reality that the High Priesthood of Christ exceeds exceedingly the High Priesthood of Aaron's order in that it's a once for all sacrifice that *cleanses* sin (as opposed to simply making a *covering* for sin in Aaron's case) and it's perpetual, that is, eternal in it's nature. Christ doesn't need to continually offer Himself for sins because the work is finished. Remember we discussed that way back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ch where we read of the fact that once Christ had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. and You recall of all the articles found in the tabernacle for the use of the priesthood one thing that didn't exist was a chair. Why? Because the work of the priest was never done, he was constantly busy about doing the necessary rituals and rites, offering gifts and sacrifices for sins. But when Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin He did so once, and it was for all; a finished work, eternal in nature.

Now, as our time drew to a close in our last gathering our attention was focused on the fact that no man takes the honors of priesthood (how much more the high priesthood) to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. Notice Vs 4

Vs4

Of the few instances we have in scripture whereby men sought to operate in the office of the priest apart from the call of God the results were tragic. It cost Korah his life, it cost Saul his kingdom, and Uzziah entered the temple a king but he left a leper, the message is clear. Woe to the man who presumes to take the office of the priesthood upon himself apart from the call of God. Yet how many today presume to operate in the context in essence of becoming their own priest. You say, “Jeff what are you talking about, is there some sort of catholic overtones here that I'm not getting?” No, no, no, listen. Do you realize that throughout human history, in every generation there has been something intuitively, instinctively with in man that has said, “I'm not good enough to approach God on my own, I need someone or something to bridge the gap between who I am, and who God is.”

Now granted I'm referencing pagan societies, or the non believing world generally, and obviously various and sundry religions throughout the planet. and Though they go about things wrong, and don't look to or honor the word of God, they've recognized, "I'm not good enough to come to God on my own." and Every generation has had that sense, until now. Now mankind (and I'll just keep it to America in general) seems to have this sense, this arrogance, this audacity that says, "Hey, I don't need anyone or anything to represent me before God, I'll do just fine on my own."

"I'll represent myself," and the essence of that statement is, "I'm my own priest." and It's great arrogance and an abomination before the Lord, we need a "Priest." But listen, not just any priest, there's only One Priesthood that we need to ascribe to, only One Mediator who is able to bridge the gap between who we are, and who God is. and That Mediator as you well know is Jesus Christ The bible is very clear, "*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all,*" 1 Tim 2:5-6 So though it's great arrogance to think we don't need a Priest, or a "Go between" between us and God, it's abominable superstition to think we need any *other* priesthood besides that of Christ's. You don't need to confess your sins to some earthly priest in order to be absolved from them, you can't do enough penance to make up for the sin in your life, that's why Christ came, He paid the price, He absorbed the penalty because we never could. We can't *earn* salvation; it's given to us freely by faith in Christ, His *finished* work on our behalf.

But no one takes the honor of being that "go between" upon oneself, but he who is called of God just as Aaron was. Aaron didn't place himself in the office of the High Priest, he wasn't elected by the popular vote of the people, he didn't campaign for the position, he was called, ordained, and appointed by God.

Now, follow me here because I'm going to leave the "interpretation" for just a minute in order to make an "application" for you and me. The interpretation is that there is no go between but that God doesn't appoint Him. and What we're going to see is that even as God appointed Aaron, so He appointed Christ, now there is no other "go between;" Christ is it. But I want to draw your attention for just a moment to the fact that there *was no* quality, no characteristic, no "special something" with in Aaron that caused God to call him into the ministry, or to use him in such a capacity specifically. and It's important that we keep this principle clear in our head and in our heart or else we'll start heading down a destructive direction thinking that God uses me because of me. The reasons that God will use me, or use you don't lie *in* me, or *in* you, they lie in Him and in His sovereignty as He operates and executes His will in the sphere of His grace. We start getting that confused suddenly we think we have something to offer God; that He got a good bargain in grabbing us, that's called pride, and God hates pride. The bible says that a man's pride will bring him low...

So Aaron didn't place himself in the position, he wasn't chosen by the people, he was chosen by God, and not because of who he was, but because of who *God* is, and His grace. You take a look at Aaron's life and you'll find he was a rather complex character. There were times he really seemed to shine with that position, that place of God's heart toward the people, other times he was a low life scoundrel who came against his own brother Moses, or created justification for the people to worship an idol and partake in pagan pleasures. I mean this guy was all over the scale, from one side to the other, he was a lot like...me, a lot like you. Oh we do our best to be consistent but who among us hasn't floundered, hasn't faltered miserably? The reasons for God's choosing Aaron weren't in Aaron, nor did Aaron appoint himself, he was ordained of God. Why does God use you, or use me, the simple result of His sovereign grace. The only ability that God looks for is availability, He'll take it from there.

Vs5-6

Now I've done enough talking here to sorta interrupt the flow so you may not see the fact that the comparison has just been articulated forthrightly. But if you'll follow the flow you see it real easy. The last of Vs 4, "...just as Aaron" the 1<sup>st</sup> of Vs 5, "So also Christ."

What does that mean? It means that even as Aaron didn't set *himself* in the position of high priest, but that God ordained and appointed him to be in that position and to maintain that platform, so Christ didn't volley for the position either. Jesus didn't set out on a campaign to place Himself there, but rather God the Father appointed, ordained and called Him to that office.

We read, "So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest." Now we're going to continue on in the context of Christ being our High Priest in just a minute but before we do I want to hone in on 5 particular words of this statement so as to draw out another application for you and me. If you're one who marks in your bible you might want to underline them or somehow draw attention to them, perhaps you noted them as we were reading, they're there in Vs 5, "Christ did not glorify Himself," do you see that there? It was not His objective glorify, magnify, or exalt Himself. Jesus said in John 8:50, "...*I do not seek My own glory;*" That wasn't His objective, His objective was to serve, to submit, and to surrender to the Father's will for His life. He said, "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*" John 6:38 and Back in John Ch 8 He said, "...*I always do those things that please Him.*" John 8:29 Always? Always.

His express agenda was to set Himself aside and live His life for the glory of His Father, He came to serve and not be served, to give His life as a ransom for many. Here's the application, so to with you and so to with me. We're not to be looking for opportunity to draw people's attention to ourselves, to somehow (even ever so subtly) glorify, or in some way magnify, that is exalt ourselves. The bible teaches us that Jesus made Himself of no reputation, we're not here to worry about our reputation, to be man pleasers, to honor ourselves in the sight of man. It's to be our express agenda to set *ourselves* aside that *we* might submit to, surrender to and serve the will of Christ for our lives. We're to be the big neon flashing arrows that merely point people to Jesus, we're not the way, we just point people to the way, the truth and the life, the One by whom no man comes to the Father except through, and that's Jesus Christ

Now at this point the reader of this epistle in this day would more than likely to have began to get a bit confused. Why? Well because we're talking here about the high priesthood of Christ, but "Houston, we have a problem." What's the problem? Well, God had ordained the lineage of the priesthood to have derived from which tribe? The tribe of Levi, specifically from the line of Aaron, and the high priest would be the eldest son of the eldest son, so on and so forth. Here's the problem, not only was Jesus not of the lineage of Aaron, He wasn't even a Levite, He was of the tribe of Judah, the kingly tribe, of the lineage and offspring of David. At what point then did He ascend to this office and how can He even function in such a capacity?

Great questions and he gives us the answer right here in Vs 5 and 6. As for when He officially received the office we read here in Vs 5, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." Now we've talked about this passage before, it's a quote from Ps 2:7, and we've gathered from studies past that it wasn't reference to Jesus' birth from the *womb* but rather it references His birth from the *tomb*. It points *to* and speaks *of* His resurrection. It wasn't while He ministered on earth that He was called into the position, the platform of the High Priest of all humanity. While He was on the earth He never once officiated in what would be considered priestly rites or rituals at all. He didn't claim nor did He function in any special ministry there in the temple, as a matter of fact He set Himself at odds with the corruption and the politicking of the priesthood in His day. and So what we're discovering here is that it wasn't during days of His earthly ministry that He was appointed the position of High Priest, but rather it was at the resurrection that He fully received the role and it's His present position in heaven.

The resurrection validates His qualification in another way as well, you see the High Priest, before He could offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people had to offer 1<sup>st</sup> a sacrifice for himself, his own sins. Christ never did, he never sinned, that's why the resurrection was inevitable, the wages of sin is death. But if Christ never sinned it was impossible that death should hold Him, therefore the resurrection validates His sinless nature, that He needed no sacrifice for Himself, He could step directly in the gap as High Priest on behalf of humanity needing no sacrifice to go before Him. Why? He's sinless. The resurrection vindicated Him as the Father's "Holy One" (Ps 16) or sinless One who would never see corruption in the grave but would be shown the path of life, pleasures at the right hand of God the Father forevermore.

As for how He can function in such a capacity, well He can't according to the Levitical order, or the Aaronic order (after the order of Aaron); then how does He qualify?

Vs 6

You see His Priesthood isn't after the order of Aaron, it's after the order of another, one who predates the law, the order of Melchizedek. Mel who a what? "Melchizedek" prôt ell...

I'd love to, but I'm not going to, you'll have to be here to tune in when we reach Ch 7 and that's when we'll get into the order of Melchizedek more fully. Suffice it for now to say this; Melchizedek steps into the scriptures from out of nowhere in Gen Ch 14, he's called "The king of Salem" (Or the king of peace) and priest of the Most High God. He interacts with Abraham for a few Vs and then he steps off of the pages of scripture forever, with the exception to a reference is the Psalms and again here in Heb. But he never comes on to the scene again with regard to who he is his interaction with anyone or anything, no beginning (as far as the record gives) and no ending. Now, follow me here, Melchizedek was both a priest and a king, something that could never happen under the Levitical law, you might be a king, or you might be a priest, but you'd never be a king and a priest.

Now the scriptures declare Christ as the King of kings, and our Great High Priest, so He can't qualify according to the Levitical order. There has to be then a different order that He can minister in such a capacity as validated by the word of God. Hence we have the order of Melchizedek, who was priest of the Most High God, king of Salem, both a king and a priest. and His ministry is eternal in its nature in that by the record we don't have a beginning or an ending regarding Melchizedek, no record of his birth, no record of his death, it's like no beginning, no end, just eternal. and So Christ qualifies as our King and our High Priest, not according to the order of Aaron, but He is a priest *forever* according to the order of Melchizedek. (More on such things when we get to Ch 7, sneak preview, teaser trailer).

But with that we have 2 unique factors that make for the High Priesthood of Christ to be a greater ordination. #1 It's eternal in its nature, Aaron didn't receive a priesthood forever, he died and the priesthood was passed on to his eldest living son. Christ's priesthood is perpetual. 2<sup>nd</sup> it's of a different order, Aaron couldn't be both a king and a priest, Christ is a high priest that resides upon the throne of Heaven as King of kings, Lord of lords.

Vs7-8

Obviously a # of things we do well to note here as we tread ever so reverently upon the holy ground of God's word here. 1<sup>st</sup> of all we note that the author underscores Christ's humanity even again, "...in the days of His flesh." Jesus came to this earth, "*in the flesh*" He was flesh and blood like you are and I am. and That's important, 1 John Ch 4 tells us, "*By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*" 1 John 4:2-3

Jesus wasn't some apparition, or someone who took the form of humanity but in reality was something more. No, as much as He was fully God, He was fully man, with out controversy great is the mystery of godliness, that God was manifested in the flesh.

So in the days of His flesh when He had "offered up prayers and supplications." *Prayers* speaking of what we might consider to be petitions, requests so on and so forth, *supplications* carrying much the same idea but with greater force, there's a sense of urgency behind this word, a passionate plea.

"with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear." Now there's a little bit of uncertainty with at what point this refers to specifically, most believe it's a reference to the garden of Gethsemane, other believe it's a reference to His cries from the cross itself. But as a side note here you can rest assured that Jesus knows what it's like to cry out vehemently passionately to God through tears in indescribable pain and anguish of heart. One has said that tears are the safety valve of the heart when too much pressure is laid upon it. He's a high priest who is able to sympathize with us and have compassion upon us.

But where we read here that He was heard *by* God because of His reverent disposition *toward* God, again there are a # of directions people take this. Some say that there in the garden His ultimate plea was, "Not My will but Yours be done." Regarding drinking the cup of the wrath of God to the dregs, Him becoming the necessary sacrifice for our sins. and In that regard God heard Him and answered Him, Christ went to the cross, it was the Father's will. (Which by the way, some see the Father as a tyrant who if it were up to Him He would crush us, but because of Jesus standing in the way sort of holding Him back He doesn't. Untrue it was the Father's plan to provide Christ, it was God who so loved the world that He gave Christ *to* the world so that we might be saved through Him.) God does not want to judge you, He wants to forgive you, and therefore He's provided the means of our atonement through Christ. Still others say that as Christ was praying in the garden and God heard Him therefore He sent an angel to Him to strengthen Him from Heaven (Luke 22). Both of which are true, I'm of the persuasion that He was heard in that He was saved from death. Oh, not saved from dying, but death didn't hold Him He was delivered from death. This could be translated, "...to Him who was able to save Him *from out of* death." and He did, He did not leave His soul in Sheol, nor did He allow His Holy One to see corruption.

So in reality He was praying that God would have His will done His way in His life. Now listen, that's an important point, because the point of prayer isn't to get my will done by the Father. I am convince that you or I will never convince God of something other than His plan, we'll never talk Him in to something He's never considered previously, that's not the point of prayer. and If you perceive prayer as such a vehicle you'll find yourself frustrated when you've been trying to talk God into something for years and He's just not going your way on it. The point of prayer isn't to talk God into our perspective, it's to get us aligned with *His* perspective.

It's that I might get in line with *His* will for my life, not me trying to get Him in line with *my* will for my life, or for that matter anyone else's life. God wants to work His will through you and one way He does that is through the vehicle of prayer. As you go to Him, humble yourself before Him, cast your cares on Him and say, "God have Your way in me, use me, here's what I've said, these are things I desire, but nevertheless not my will but Yours be done." That's when you'll begin to see God move powerfully through your prayer life.

You won't be frustrated when you give something over to God and then it doesn't go your way, you didn't *want it to go your way*. You wanted it to go His way, and so praise the Lord, your way would've only messed things up, His way orchestrates our eternal good, and His eternal glory, somehow and in some way. Jesus was praying not for deliverance from dying, but that God might deliver Him from the hands of death, and God heard Him and He was raised from the dead.

Vs8

I don't know about you but for me this Vs is just hard to take in. Contemplating Christ learning obedience through the things which He suffered... What does that mean? Well, let me tell you what it doesn't mean. It doesn't mean that Christ was ever *disobedient*, that He moved from *disobedience*, to *obedience* via the medium of suffering. That may describe you and me, but it's not a description of what was taking place in the life of Christ. Here's the deal, as God in heaven what is there to learn? Nothing, there's nothing that God doesn't know fully, however when God wraps Himself in humanity in the person of Jesus Christ He learned (if you will) the cost that obedience demands when suffering is involved, and the pain that can be involved in simply being human. and He learned *experientially* what can be entailed in obedience, and that it doesn't always come ez, though for Christ it always came nonetheless. So it's not that He learned *how* to obey, He learned the cost that obedience can demand when suffering is involved.

Now, hear me on this and we'll wrap up and wind down. If suffering was a fit tool to teach the Son of God, you know what that means, you know where I'm going with this you can see it coming, that means it's a fit tool to teach you and me as well. Contrary to a pretty popular teaching I'm going to tell you that nowhere does the bible teach us that strong faith will hedge us from hardship and that suffering is a sign of backsliding or a weak believer. As a matter of fact I see just the opposite of that in multiple places throughout the scriptures. The bible teaches us that as believers we're appointed to afflictions (1 Thess 3:3) that through *many* tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22) and that our current suffering is but a prelude to glorification (Rom 8:17-18). If suffering was fit for Jesus, how then can I suppose myself to good for the lessons it holds in store for me?

God would have us to learn from our trials, our troubled times, our suffering and hardship, so often we waste our suffering complaining against God, becoming embittered toward God or our brothers and sisters when God would desire to strengthen us through the various experiences that life brings us to and brings us through. May God help us to learn what it means to be truly submissive to Him, not our will but His be done, not looking to get our agenda done by Him, but submitting to His agenda for our lives. Not drawing attention to ourselves, but pointing people to Jesus Christ to Whom belong the blessing and honor, the power, and glory forever. Amen.

If you've never received the atoning work of Jesus Christ on your behalf, there's still a void between you and God, sin is separating you from a relationship with Him, why not let Christ span the gap and cleanse you of all sin, today?

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for Your Word; as You just assure us over and over again of the sufficiency of Christ on our behalf. May You comfort our hearts and increase our faith. Lord, help us not to recoil from the things You would have us *learn by* or *grow through*, we thank You that we can come to You with prayers and supplications, vehement cries and tears if need be. and You hear our cry, bring comfort to our heart, and strengthen us in the inner man. May Your will be done Your way in this fellowship collectively, and in our lives individually.